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Physical Attractiveness: Its Influence on the Perception of Counselors

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Physical Attractiveness: Its Influence on the Perception of Counselors

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ABSTRACT

60 undergraduate students evaluated male and female counselors on fifteen counselor variables based on listening to a tape recording of a counselor self-introduction paired with an attractive or unattractive picture. Two groups served as control groups; they heard the tape but received no picture. The attractive counselor was perceived as significantly more decisive, interesting, caring, open-minded, likeable and better adjusted than the unattractive counselor. These effects were more pronounced for the female counselors than for the male counselors.

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There are many attributes and qualities that are considered when evaluating an individual's personality. Many people would like to think that we judge others fairly and objectively. One might hope that qualities such as warmth, sensitivity, compassion, intelligence and sense of humor would be the main characteristics that others use to evaluate our personalities. Unfortunately, extensive research shows that this is not true, at least upon initial evaluation of others. It is possible that we never allow ourselves to have the opportunity to get to know others' feelings and interests if they do not meet our minimum standards for physical attractiveness. Bias regarding physical appearance is one facet of person-perception of which counselors should be aware.

Physical attractiveness can have profound, far-reaching effects on personality development. There may be more to what Charles Cooley (1902) refers to as our "looking-glass self" than we would like to acknowledge. We often perceive ourselves as others see us. A sense of social role emerges side by side with our sense of selfhood. So, it follows that if others perceive us as possessing certain qualities, we often attribute them to ourselves. If physical appearance has an effect on how others perceive us, then it can influence our own self concept through feedback we receive

from others and thereby influence personality style (Berscheid, Dion, Walster, 1971; Goldman and Lewis, 1977).

Physical attributes tend to evoke complete and pervasive stereotypes in the perceiver (Landy and Sigall, 1974; Cash, Gillen and Burns, 1977; Dion, Berscheid and Walster, 1972; Heilman and Saruwateri, 1979). It is generally acknowledged in our culture that slimness is desirable. Obese people are discriminated against in job selection, clothing selection and even in insurance rates. Our literature and cultural impressions tend to support these stereotypes. Almost all media and advertisements depict thin, attractive people. Even in fairy tales, when do we see an unattractive hero or heroine, or an attractive villain?

Physical characteristics ranging from height to weight and even beardedness can have marked effects on first impressions. Pancer and Meindl (1978) have shown that the length of a man's hair can have discriminatory effects in industrial, business and academic settings. They found that long-haired individuals were perceived as less intelligent and more reckless than their short-haired counterparts. This evidence of stereotyping physical qualities can have social and interpersonal implications. Therefore, it seems important to consider what effects physical attractiveness can have on others.

The work of Berscheid, Dion, Walster and Walster (1971) suggests that physically attractive individuals generally

have a considerable social advantage as compared to unattractive individuals. The physical attractiveness stereotype such that "what is beautiful is good" can have implications early in life with regard to perception of others. Dion (1973) has shown that adult subjects tend to support this premise when presented with accounts of transgressions supposedly committed by children of varying physical attractiveness. When the child's transgression was severe, the act was viewed less negatively when committed by a good-looking child than when the offender was unattractive. In addition, when the child was unattractive, the offense was more likely to be seen as reflecting some enduring dispositional quality in the child's personality. Subjects believed that the unattractive children were more likely to be involved in future misdeeds. These findings show that unattractive individuals are penalized even when there is no apparent logical relationship between the misdeed and the way they look. This, naturally, can have implications regarding the child's personality development and their attitudes towards others.

It has been found that a teacher's behavior may be influenced by the student's attractiveness. Clifford and Walster (1973) examined the effects of children's physical attractiveness upon teacher expectations. Teachers were asked to evaluate student's intellectual potential from a report card and

a verbal description of the child's accomplishments accompanied by a photo of either an attractive or unattractive child. For both male and female children, the teachers gave a more positive evaluation to the attractive child, even though all information about the children was identical. Also, teachers expected physically attractive children to have greater academic potential and better social relationships with their peers than the unattractive children.

Male college students judged both an essay and the essay writer as more competent when the author was an attractive female than when the writer was an unattractive female (Landy and Sigall, 1974). The bias was more pronounced when the work was of low quality than of high quality. Thus, both competence and physical attractiveness interacted to affect judgements. Dion, Berscheid and Walster (1972) found that attractive people were perceived as more competent, both professionally and parentally, and were also expected to have more personal happiness and success than unattractive subjects.

Just as physical characteristics of students affect a teacher's behavior, physical characteristics of teachers may affect reactions of students (Chaiken, Gillen, Derlega, Heinen and Wilson, 1978). A teacher's physical attractiveness and nonverbal behavior exert powerful effects on a student's perception of that teacher's ability to teach. An attractive teacher was rated as more competent and better able to stim-

ulate and motivate students than when she was cosmetically altered to appear unattractive.

The effects of physical attractiveness upon interpersonal communication are evident. Effran (1974) found that attractive defendents received lower ratings of guilt and less severe recommendations of punishments than did unattractive defendants. Jacobson (1981) demonstrated that attractive rapists received shorter recommended prison terms than unattractive rapists from both male and female subjects. In addition, rapists of attractive women received longer prison sentences than rapists of unattractive women (Thornton, 1977).

Mills and Aronson's (1965) study indicated that attractive people were rated as being more persuasive than unattractive people. Miller (1970) reports that physically attractive people were judged to be more flexible, likeable, confident, friendly and sensitive than the physically unattractive. Other studies show that subjects not only perceive attractive people as better, but prefer to interact with potential social partners that are physically attractive (Berscheid et al, 1971; Krebs and Adinolfi, 1975; Cash and Derlega, 1978).

As Krebs and Adinolfi (1975) state, physical unattractiveness has the most extreme social implications. Unattractiveness evokes unfavorable trait attribution, which mediates social avoidance. Social avoidance preserves the initial

impression by reducing the probability of exposure to disconfirming information, which deprives the physically unattractive individual of the feedback necessary to develop socially effective personalities. Physically attractive individuals have more interaction with the opposite sex and, therefore, develop more self-confidence (Berscheid et al., 1971). Being physically attractive seems to evoke more social rewards; because social behavior entails exchange, it is plausible that those who evoke more positive responses also emit them (Barocas and Vance, 1974). The development of self-esteem and confidence in attractive people is seen by some researchers as the determining factor in the development of personality dispositions oriented toward ambition and success (Mahoney, 1978; Krebs and Adinolfi, 1975).

In particular, Goldman and Lewis (1977) suggest that the physical attractiveness stereotype may have a good deal of truth to it with regard to social competence. In their study, students were asked to rate telephone partners for social skills, anxiety, liking and desirability for future interactions. The more physically attractive partners were rated higher by the students and as more socially skillful than were their unattractive counterparts. Perhaps physically attractive people have a different socialization experience than unattractive people. It appears from these research findings that they are more

apt to receive favorable social exchanges, which may create different personality styles than unattractive people and thus perpetuate the "beautiful is good" stereotype.

There are, however, some negative implications for physical attractiveness that cannot be ignored. Sigall and Ostrove (1975) found that when crime was unrelated to attractiveness, e.g., burglary, attractive defendants received lower ratings of guilt. But, when the crime was related to attractiveness, e.g., swindle, the punishment was more harsh for the attractive people. In other words, we like beautiful people, but we do not like them to flaunt it or to consciously use their beauty to their advantage. Dermer and Theil (1975) report that when photos of beautiful women were shown to subjects, these women were perceived to be more materialistic, vain, snobbish, bourgeois and more likely to experience divorce than were less attractive women. Also, the authors felt that physically unattractive women are the ones most likely to carry "well-honed hatchets" for attractive female targets. Unattractive women, therefore, might perceive attractive women as frustrating.

Investigations aimed at addressing the effects of appearance in work settings reveal a general bias in favor of attractiveness in hiring decisions (Dipboye, Arvey and Terpstra, 1977). However, when seeking a managerial position,

unattractive women actually had an advantage over attractive women in several studies (summarized by Heilman and Saruwateri, 1979). These effects held for ratings of qualifications, recommendations for hire and suggested starting salary. In some cases, extremely attractive individuals were rejected in favor of those more moderately attractive. Heilman and Saruwateri (1979) suggest that physical attractiveness exaggerates perceptions of gender-related attributes. Since managerial or professional career attributes are more often ascribed to males than to females, physically attractive females would only exaggerate the perceptions of femininity and thereby, the lack of fit for a managerial position (Schein, 1973).

Some researchers (Krebs and Adinolfi, 1975) hypothesize that physical attractiveness is an attribute primarily thought to be employed to enhance relations with the opposite sex. It would not be expected to exert a positive effect on social relations among members of the same sex, who might perceive themselves as in competition with one another, and may be jealous of their success with the opposite sex. In addition, the physically attractive may be rejected because they failed to demonstrate a concern for their less attractive peers. The individualistic, ambitious and unaffiliative personality style characteristic of physically attractive people could prove to be abrasive or threatening to other students or peers (Miller, 1970).

However, the bulk of the research on physical attractiveness agrees with Farina, Fischer, Sherman, Smith, Groh and Mermin's (1977) contention that physically attractive people are thought to be better adjusted than unattractive people. These authors hypothesize that the relatively unattractive person is at higher risk for emotional problems leading to hospitalization. Physically unattractive people are subject to harsher and more stressful social environments, since they receive less positive social feedback. This increased stress could result in a higher risk for psychological problems or abnormal personality development. Indeed, Farina et al. (1977) found that attractive mental patients were hospitalized for a shorter duration than their unattractive counterparts. The attractive patients also received more visits from the community than did the unattractive patients, which is likely to have affected improvements of symptoms. Adinolfi's (1970) findings report that unattractive people were termed more passive, constrained and self-protected with asocial patterns of personality needs. This study also concluded that unattractive people tend to seek more professional psychological assistance than subjects from any other group; therefore, unattractive people are perceived as being more psychologically unstable.

Cash, Kehr, Polyson and Freeman (1977) examined the physical attractiveness stereotype as it pertains to peer

evaluations of psychological disturbance. Attractive individuals were perceived to be less disturbed and to have better prognoses than unattractive subjects. In this study, as in several others (Carter, 1978), it appears that unattractiveness was the determining factor more than attractiveness. The unattractive subjects were given poorer prognoses and more maladjustment ratings than either attractive or control subjects. These results warrant exploration and consideration in clinical contexts in therapy.

Physical attractiveness seems to operate as a source of social influence on actual behavior responsiveness as well as interpersonal judgements (Corrigan, Dell, Lewis and Schmidt, 1980). Many studies have emphasized the role that personality and physical characteristics of both clients and counselors play in overall outcome of therapy (Goldstein and Shipman, 1961; Martin, Friedmeyer and Moore, 1971; Hobfall and Penner, 1978; Shapiro, Struening, Barten and Shapiro, 1973). Research shows that a favorable view of a counselor by the client is important to a client's expectancy for the relationship and is directly related to the outcome of the counseling process (Carkhuff, 1969; Carter, 1978; Truax, 1975). Goldstein and Shipman (1961) attest that a high degree of client attraction toward the counselor enhances the client commitment to treatment, expectancies of positive outcome and the client's

receptivity to counselor influence. Therapist physical attractiveness has been found to enhance the breadth and depth of client self-disclosure in initial encounters (Brundage, Derlega and Cash, 1977; Cash, 1978). Thus, physical attractiveness may help a counselor to be perceived better by a client and thereby, help the counseling process.

Cash, Begley, McCown and Weise (1975) found significant positive effects of physical attractiveness for male counselors in relation to perceived competence, trustworthiness, effectiveness in helping with personal problems, intelligence and friendliness when subjects viewed videotapes of attractive and unattractive counselors using the same script. Subjects also expressed greater confidence in the attractive counselor for help with personal problems. Attractive female counselors were also perceived to be more competent, attentive and professional in a study by Lewis and Walsh (1978).

In addition, research indicates that physical attractiveness facilitates disclosure from others (Chaiken and Derlega, 1974; Cozby, 1973; Cash, 1978). In all of these studies, clients self-disclosed more about themselves to attractive counselors than to unattractive ones. Sigall and Aronson (1969) demonstrated that subjects were more willing to return for more therapy sessions with an attractive counselor.

Physical attractiveness stereotypes can also interfere with counselor's evaluations of clients. Barocas and Vance

(1974) found that attractiveness ratings of clients by counselors were positively correlated with prognosis and outcome of client's therapy. Goldstein (1971) concurs that the counselor's perception of a client's attributes not only is an important ingredient towards building a therapeutic relationship, but that a counselor's or client's initial impressions of each other are significantly related to improvement and outcome measures. Shapiro, Struening, Shapiro and Barten (1976) found that there was a strong, positive relationship between therapist and client ratings of improvement and their evaluations of each other as physically attractive, likeable and either a good therapist or a good client for treatment. Schofield (1964) contends that there are particular types of clients that are favored by counselors. This type of client is labeled "YAVIS"--young, attractive, verbal, intelligent and successful (Goldstein, 1971; Strupp, 1963).

Schwartz and Abramowitz (1978) conducted a study to test the effects of a female client's physical attractiveness on the clinical judgements of male counselor trainees. The results indicate that the unattractive client was regarded as more likely to terminate therapy prematurely and she also received fewer relationship building responses from the counselors than the identically portrayed physically attrac-

tive client. This bias on behalf of a therapist must be noted, for it can play an important part in the therapeutic process. Goldstein (1973) and Goldstein, Heller and Sechrest (1966) investigated the effects of a counselor's favorable response to a client and found that a client talks more, is more spontaneous and less resistent to therapy when the counselor finds the client highly attractive.

It is obvious that physical attractiveness operates to trigger cognitive, affective and behavioral response cues in many different interpersonal situations. With regard to counseling, the results of extensive research suggests that the initial relationship developed between client and therapist is crucial to therapy itself. Physical attractiveness or unattractiveness can bias initial impression formation about people, and therefore have effects upon the counseling process. Obviously, there are certain limitations to this influence. Physical attractiveness is only one of many facets of attractiveness, which is a subjective phenomenon that is often influenced by personality factors. Counselor physical attractiveness will also interact with other variables in the therapeutic process; however, it is important to be aware of the physical attractiveness stereotype and the effects it can have on potential issues in the counseling process.

The premises underlying the present research examine the influence of counselor physical attractiveness and gender on fifteen characteristics rated by male and female subjects. In addition, this study adds dimensions related to empathy and congruence to the work previously done by Cash et al (1975; 1977). These dimensions strategically relate to the therapeutic process (Carkhuff, 1969) and thereby help to assess the influence of physical attractiveness on perceived therapeutic qualities of counselors.

In the present study, it was hypothesized that the physically attractive counselors would have higher ratings on all counselor variables than would unattractive or control counselors. Previous research suggests that the effect may be that the unattractive counselors would be rated lower than either attractive or control counselors (Cash and Kehr, 1978).

In addition, it was hypothesized that physical attractiveness would effect the perception of male and female counselors in the same manner. It was also expected that there would be interactions between counselor gender and counselor physical attractiveness.

This study expands on work done by Cash, Begley, McCown and Weise (1975), who used only one stimulus person who was cosmetically altered for each condition. It also attempts to delineate attractive vs. unattractive counselors better

than Carter (1978), with a wider range between ratings of attractive counselors and unattractive counselors.

METHOD

Subjects. 60 undergraduate students participated in the study. Ages ranged from 20-55 (M=31).

Procedure. Subjects were randomly assigned to one of six groups composed of five males and five females. They were asked to respond to the dependent measures on the basis of listening to a tape recording. Three groups heard a tape recording of a male counselor; three groups heard a tape recording of a female counselor. Group One was simultaneously shown a picture of an attractive male and asked to rate this counselor on fifteen personality variables. Group Two received a picture of an unattractive male and subjects were asked to rate him on the same characteristics. Group Three received no picture and rated the counselor on the basis of the tape alone. This procedure was repeated for the last three groups, who heard a tape of a female counselor. Group Four saw a picture of an attractive female; group Five received a picture of an unattractive female and group Six received no picture.

Subjects were asked to complete evaluation forms regarding their initial impressions of the counselor they had just heard. Subjects rated the counselor they heard on a list of 15-7 step rating scales (similar to those used by Cash et al, 1975) each

composed of bipolar anchoring adjectives. A list of these counselor variables and instructions is presented in Appendices A and B.

Two 2-minute audio recordings, one by a male and one by a female were utilized. The script of the tapes included statements regarding the counselor's training and background, experience, interests and activities. This self-description is viewed as a typical introductory statement made by a counselor in an initial therapy session (Cash, Begley, McCown and Weise, 1975). Both tapes consisted of the same script and were spoken in a warm, friendly, yet matter-of-fact manner (see Appendix C).

Two photos of Caucasian males and females were used. They were standardized by 50 students asked to rank order the photos of thirty people within sex, according to their physical attractiveness. Pictures were chosen at random from a college yearbook. This standardization procedure has been employed in numerous studies in this area of inquiry (Jacobson, 1981; Cash, Begley, McCown and Weise, 1975; Janda, O'Grady and Barnhart, 1981; Carter, 1978). The male and female photographs receiving the highest and lowest mean ratings for physical attractiveness were chosen for the study. There was a significant difference between means of attractive and unattractive photographs for both males and females. The male photos

had mean ratings of 12.1 and 3.5 on a rating scale ranging from 1 to 15, with 1 the minimum rating and 15 the maximum or most attractive. The female pictures used the same rating system; mean ratings were 13.2 and 2.4. Sex and order of presentation of photos were randomly assigned.

RESULTS

Based on a multiple analysis of variance (MANOVA), Wilk's lambda criterion yielded a significant main effect for the attractiveness condition ($F(30,80) = 4.04$; p .0001). Attractive counselors received higher ratings than unattractive counselors or the control groups that received no picture. There was also a significant main effect due to sex of therapist ($F(15,40) = 2.29$; p. .01). Female therapists generally received higher ratings on counselor variables than did male counselors. There was no interaction effect.

After the MANOVA, univariate analysis of variance procedures were computed for each counselor variable. Tables 1 and 2 show the means and standard deviations for each counselor variable. Table 3 shows the F-value obtained for each variable comparing overall ratings of attractive vs. unattractive counselors. Attractive counselors were rated as being more decisive (p .01), interesting (p .0002), caring (p .03), open-minded (p .01), likeable (p .001), well-adjusted (p .001) and understanding (p .01) than

unattractive counselors. The physical attractiveness variable was also significant (p .0001), which indicates that the pictures were viewed similarly by subjects in the standardization procedure and in the study itself.

Additionally, Duncan's multiple range tests were computed for each counselor variable. This analysis compared individual means with one another, in an effort to sort out which groups caused the actual differences in means from the MANOVA.

Attractive counselors rated significantly (p .05) higher than either unattractive or control counselors on the following variables: decisive, open-minded, likeable, well-adjusted and understanding. Attractive counselors were also perceived as being significantly (p .05) more caring, trustworthy and considerate than control counselors, but did not differ significantly from the unattractive counselors on these variables. Also, attractive counselors were rated higher (p .05) than unattractive counselors on ratings of sincerity. There was no difference between attractive counselors and control counselors on this variable. Unattractive counselors were rated as (p .05) less interesting than attractive or control counselors. In addition, the attractiveness variable yielded significant (p .05) differences between attractive counselors, unattractive counselors and control counselors.

Female counselors rated significantly (p .05) higher than male counselors on 8 of the 15 variables. They were perceived as more competent, interesting, likeable, well-adjusted, understanding and considerate regardless of their attractiveness or unattractiveness. Subjects also felt significantly (p .05) more comfortable disclosing personal information to the female counselors than to the male counselors.

TABLE 1

Means and Standard Deviations of Counselor Variables for Attractive, Unattractive and Anonymous Female Counselors

Variable	Attractive		Unattractive		Control	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Competent	6.70	.483	5.90	1.66	6.40	.843
Decisive	6.60	.516	5.20	1.61	5.20	1.47
Professional	6.80	.421	5.90	1.37	6.00	1.24
Interesting	6.10	.875	4.70	1.25	5.20	1.54
Trustworthy	6.40	1.26	6.00	.942	5.60	1.42
Sincere	6.80	.421	5.70	1.33	6.20	1.22
Intelligent	6.40	1.89	6.50	.527	6.30	.674
Caring	6.30	1.33	6.10	1.44	5.50	1.43
Open-minded	6.50	.527	5.70	.948	5.50	1.26
Likeable	6.80	.421	5.70	1.05	6.10	.994
Well-adjusted	7.00	.000	5.60	1.07	6.20	.918
Understanding	6.80	.421	6.10	.875	6.00	.942
Considerate	6.70	.483	6.10	.875	6.10	.875
Attractive	6.50	.527	3.50	1.08	5.20	1.13
Comfortable to talk to	6.10	1.10	4.60	1.50	4.90	1.85

TABLE 2

Means and Standard Deviations of Counselor Variables for Attractive, Unattractive and Anonymous Male Counselors

Variable	Attractive		Unattractive		Control	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Competent	5.90	.875	5.40	.966	5.40	1.42
Decisive	5.90	.567	5.20	1.13	5.70	1.05
Professional	6.10	.994	5.40	1.50	5.80	1.39
Interesting	5.40	1.26	3.20	1.47	5.10	1.10
Trustworthy	6.00	.816	5.20	1.22	5.10	1.10
Sincere	6.20	.788	5.60	1.50	5.80	1.39
Intelligent	6.10	.567	5.70	.948	5.90	.875
Caring	6.10	.875	5.60	1.26	4.70	1.63
Open-minded	6.00	1.15	5.10	1.44	5.00	1.41
Likeable	6.20	.421	4.70	1.41	5.50	1.50
Well-adjusted	6.10	.316	5.10	1.44	5.50	1.26
Understanding	6.20	.421	5.30	1.41	5.20	1.39
Considerate	6.20	.421	5.70	1.25	5.60	1.07
Attractive	5.90	.316	1.80	1.13	4.60	.966
Comfortable to talk to	4.50	1.35	4.10	1.96	4.20	1.75

TABLE 3

Univariate Tests of Significance

for

Attractive and Unattractive Counselors

Counselor Variable	F	p
Competent	1.73	.18
Decisive	4.63	.01**
Professional	2.28	.11
Interesting	10.37	.0002****
Trustworthy	2.89	.06
Sincere	2.63	.08
Intelligent	.14	.86
Caring	3.45	.03*
Open-minded	4.24	.01**
Likeable	7.52	.001***
Well-adjusted	7.50	.001***
Understanding	4.88	.01**
Considerate	2.85	.06
Attractive	76.57	.0001****
I'd feel comfortable disclosing personal information	1.92	.15

Discussion

The results support the hypothesis of a clear, positive effect for physically attractive counselors. It appears that the stereotype "what is beautiful is good" carries over into counseling. A general positive effect for physical attractiveness is suggested from the results, as opposed to the results found by Cash and Kehr (1978), where a debilitative effect for unattractiveness occurred. Attractive counselors were rated significantly higher than unattractive or control counselors on several variables that are seen as facilitative to client self-exploration (Truax, 1975; Carkhuff, 1969), counseling outcome (Goldstein and Shipman, 1971), and the therapeutic process (Truax, 1975). Shapiro et al. (1973) found that the most important items that correlated with prognosis were client and therapist perceptions of each other as likeable, competent and physically attractive individuals. The present findings indicate that physical attractiveness alone exerts an interpersonal influence such that those counselors are perceived as more competent and likeable. If this is coupled with the assertion that physical attractiveness facilitates self-disclosure in initial encounters (Brundage, Derlega and Cash, 1977), it appears that physically attractive counselors may have a therapeutic advantage, at least in initial sessions. In addition, since physically attractive coun-

selors were also perceived as more likeable, the therapeutic process itself could be facilitated (Schofield, 1964; Goldstein, 1971).

Obviously, there are limits to the initial impact of physical attractiveness in counselors. The subjects in this study were limited to initial impressions based solely on a picture accompanying a tape recording. Personality variables are multi-faceted and are more difficult to judge by photograph than by videotape or a live encounter. Counselor physical attractiveness will interact with other variables in the counseling process; yet it merits consideration of the influence it exerts.

There was a main effect for counselor gender reported. This is due to the fact that females rated higher in all three groups than did their male counterparts consistently across counselor variables. This could indicate a sexual stereotype that females may be seen as more therapeutic regardless of their physical attractiveness. These results concur with those found by Boulware and Holmes (1970) and Fuller (1964), in which subjects preferred female therapists when dealing with personal and social concerns. Further examination of this finding is necessary, especially considering Carter's (1978) findings that female subjects had more positive views and expectations of female counselors. Subjects in the current study were matched equally in groups, with five males and five

females in each group. The exact implications of the finding of a main effect for counselor gender warrant further research with attention drawn to the sex of the subjects and possibly to include the physical attractiveness of the subjects as well.

The absence of an interaction effect for physical attractiveness X counselor gender is unique in this field of research. It was expected that these variables might interact differently with one another on several counselor variables.

The results as outlined in Table 3 could be viewed as reflections of previously identified therapeutic variables (Carkhuff, 1969; Truax, 1975). The therapist variables of understanding, likeability, open-mindedness and caring were significantly intercorrelated and would seem to encapsulate Carkhuff's definition of the empathic counselor. The therapist variables termed decisive and well-adjusted were also significantly intercorrelated and can be indicative of Carkhuff's term of congruence. All six of these variables were statistically significant in this study. There was also a significant difference in the variable termed interesting. However, this variable did not correlate highly with some of the other variables that significantly differentiated attractive and unattractive counselors. These inferences warrant further consideration due to their tenative nature and influence on the counseling process.

One factor limiting the external validity of this study is the fact that all subjects were undergraduate students, who would not represent a normal population. Another area of exploration might include a factor analysis of the counselor variables to examine which factors are the most influenced by physical attractiveness or unattractiveness.

However, the present study indicates that physical attractiveness mediates initial impressions in many interpersonal processes and extends into the therapeutic realm as well. It is importatnt to be aware of the physical attractiveness stereotype and the effects it can have on potential issues in the counseling process.

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APPENDIX A

We'd like you to give us your perceptions of the personality characteristics of the counselor presented on the tape. We realize that it is difficult to judge a person based on a brief exposure like this tape; but this is exactly what we're interested in finding out--your INITIAL IMPRESSIONS of this counselor. Therefore, it's important that you give your frank, honest reactions, no matter how positive or negative they might be.

Your reactions are confidential and will <u>not</u> be revealed to the counselor or anyone else.

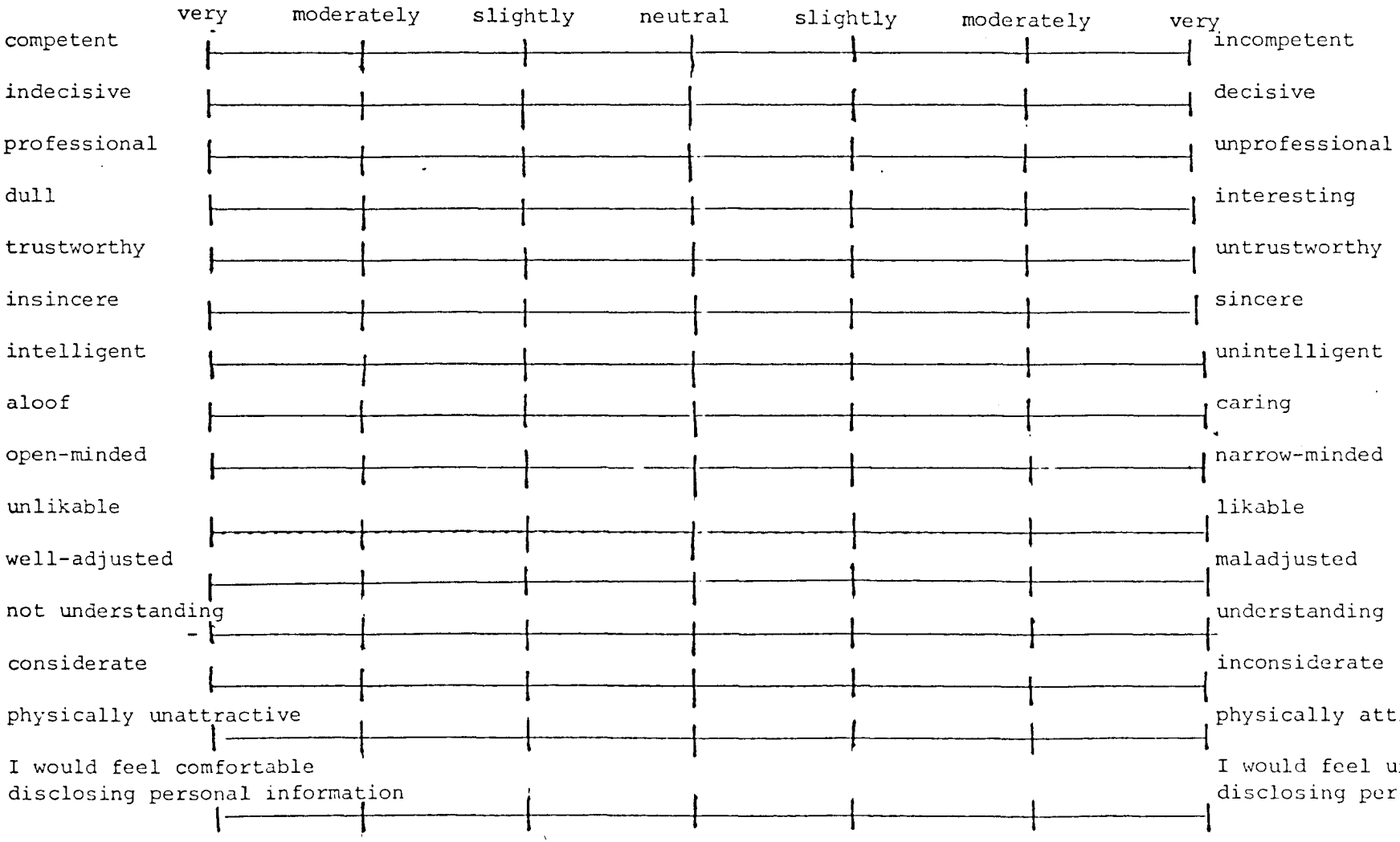
Use the scales on the following page in this manner:

Each scale is a 7-point scale which consists of two opposite characteristics (traits) written at the ends of the scale. First you must decide <u>which</u> of the two adjectives better describes the counselor; then you must decide <u>how closely</u> that adjective fits the counselor. Then you circle the appropriate <u>point</u> on the scale.

Consider the example below: First you would decide whether the counselor impresses you as being a "casual" person or a "formal" person. If you feel he/she is casual, then you would circle a point ranging from very casual to slightly casual which indicates how casual he/she seems to you. If you felt that the counselor was a formal-type of person, then you'd circle a point ranging from very to slightly on the formal side of the scale.

CIRCLE ONLY ONE POINT ON EACH OF THE SCALES; OMIT NONE.

UAL very moderately slightly neutral slightly moderately very FORMAL


very
moderately
slightly
neutral
slightly
moderately
very
competent
incompetent
indecisive
decisive
professional
unprofessional
dull
interesting
trustworthy
untrustworthy
insincere
sincere
intelligent
unintelligent
aloof
caring
open-minded
narrow-minded
unlikable
likable
well-adjusted
maladjusted
not understanding
understanding
considerate
inconsiderate
physically unattractive
physically attractive
I would feel comfortable disclosing personal information
I would feel uncomfortable disclosing personal informatio

APPENDIX B

APPENDIX C

Script for Tape Recording

"Hello. My name is Dr. Joan/John Wiley and I'd like to take just a few minutes to tell you something about myself and my work.

First of all, I am thirty years old and a clinical psychologist. After I graduated from college I went on to attend graduate school for four years at a major university. During that time, I studied most of the usual areas of psychology but I became <u>especially</u> interested in people and the personal problems that they might have.

After graduate school I completed a year's internship at a community mental health center. There I counseled both children and adults who were having psychological difficulties in their lives.

For the past two years, I have been a counselor at a university counseling center. There I have talked mostly with college students and have attempted to help them with their personal problems. As a counselor, I see students individually and sometimes also work with them in groups. One of the main things that I try to do is to help these people better understand themselves and to help them work out whatever problems they are having. Of course, I don't try to help each person in exactly the same way since no two people or their problems

are exactly alike. But I always listen very carefully to each person so as to understand him or her better. At times I also make suggestions which I feel could help clients overcome their particular problems so that they can enjoy their lives more.

Although, as a psychologist, I spend much of my time counseling students, I'm also involved in other activities at the university. I teach a few psychology courses and I conduct research on several topics I'm interested in.

Well, thanks for visiting with me. I appreciate having had this opportunity for you to get to know me a bit."